

REMARKS

Applicants acknowledge receipt of the Office Action dated December 29, 2004. Claims 1-46, 57, and 58 are pending in the application. Please note that claims 1, 17, 36, and 57 are independent claims. Claims 1-46 are allowed. By this Response, claim 57 is amended, and claims 47-56 and 59-60 are cancelled. The Examiner has rejected claims 47-60 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. In addition, the Examiner has rejected claims 47-56, 59, and 60 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Cooper et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,317,156 (*Cooper*) and further in view of Mori et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,455,852 (*Mori*). Applicants believe that all pending claims are allowable over the art of record and respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of all claims.

I. Claims 57 and 58 are allowable.

The Examiner has objected to claims 57 and 58 and notes that “[c]laims 57,58 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, set forth in this Office action and to include all of the limitations of the base claims and any intervening claims. (Office Action, page 6, section 9) In the Advisory Action, the Examiner found that the Applicants' reply had overcome the 35 U.S.C § 112 rejection. In such reply, the Applicants had amended then pending claim 47. By this Response, Applicants have amended claim 57 to include all of the limitations of claims 47 and 56. Therefore, Applicants submit that claim 57, as amended, is allowable. Claim 58 is dependent upon claim 57, and Applicants also respectfully submit that claim 58 is allowable. Consequently, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to withdraw the objections and allow claims 57 and 58.

II. Conclusion

Applicants believe that in view of the foregoing remarks, all claims are allowable and that the present application is now in full condition for allowance, which action Applicants earnestly solicit. If the Examiner has any questions or comments regarding the foregoing, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned.

In the course of the foregoing discussions, Applicants may have at times referred to claim limitations in shorthand fashion, or may have focused on a particular claim element. This discussion should not be interpreted to mean that the other limitations can be ignored or dismissed. The claims must be viewed as a whole, and each limitation of the claims must be considered when determining the patentability of the claims. Moreover, it should be understood that there may be other distinctions between the claims and the prior art which have yet to be raised, but which may be raised in the future.

If any fees are inadvertently omitted or if any additional fees are required or have been overpaid, please appropriately charge or credit those fees to Conley Rose, P.C. Deposit Account Number 03-2769.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tod T. Tumey', is written over a horizontal line.

Tod T. Tumey
PTO Reg. No. 47,146
CONLEY ROSE, P.C.
P.O. Box 3267
Houston, TX 77253-3267
(713) 238-8000 (Phone)
(713) 238-8008 (Fax)
ATTORNEY FOR APPLICANTS